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1. Soon after World War II friction developed between Klement Gottwald, Chairman of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSC), and Rudolf Slansky, Secretary-General of the Party. Slansky had returned to Prague after the war with the intention of building a powerful organizational apparatus with a general secretariat completely devoted to him. In the summer of 1945, therefore, he purged the general secretariat of those who had been members of Gottwald's pre-war faction in Prague, including Vaclav David, Ivan Holy, and Oldrich Ilas.

2. David has been a member of the KSC since the thirties, although before the war he was not active publicly. During World War II he was a member of the Communist underground which fought against the Germans. David did not play a conspicuous role, however, and so managed to escape arrest. He is a clerk-like type of person, indecisive, not very bright, but obedient and disciplined. In the newly established Central Secretariat of the Party, David had become chief of the cadre department. He had been supported by Josef Frosner, head of the Prague region of the KSC, and Gottwald. Frosner and Gottwald, who had known David before the war, were sure that he would unconditionally obey their directives and not act independently. The cadre department's function was to appoint Communists to key positions in the government and in nationalized industry. Ivan Holy, former deputy of the Communist Party for the Prague region, had been appointed head of the organizational department and Oldrich Ilas chief of the propaganda department.

3. Slansky had David transferred to Parliament as a Communist deputy, Holy assigned to doing Party work in the Prague districts, and Ilas made head of the National Committee of Vinohrady (Prague 12) district. Slansky was not satisfied with these denotions, however, and in 1946 he appointed Ilas chief of the housing department of the Central National Committee in Prague. During Ilas' tenure there, various machinations and mismanagement in the allotment of apartments were revealed. Ilas was suspended and Slansky insisted on his punishment and discharge from the Party. Upon Gottwald's intervention, however, the affair was dropped and Ilas was made a commercial manager in nationalized industry. After Slansky's removal, Gottwald appointed Ilas Czechoslovak Minister to Norway.

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4. David played a passive role in Parliament, partly because of his personality and partly because he realized that as long as Slansky was in control, none of the people he had removed could better their position in the Party. Gottwald continued to support David, however. The President frequently praised him and urged him to take part in Parliamentary delegations abroad so that he could acquire foreign experience. With Slansky out of the way, Gottwald on 31 January 1953 appointed David Minister of Foreign Affairs.
5. In 1945, Slansky also opposed the appointment of Krosnar, another member of Gottwald's clique, to the post of Deputy Secretary-General of the KSC. A compromise was reached between Gottwald and Slansky according to which Krosnar was appointed head of the Prague region of the Party.
6. Gottwald's appointment of David as Foreign Minister achieved a much greater purpose than that of merely rewarding a friend. The previous Foreign Minister, Viliam Siroky, a Slansky man, is very ambitious and a master of behind-the-scenes intrigues. Siroky is also a patient man as shown by the fact that it took him five years to wrest control of the Communist Party in Slovakia from Gustav Husak, Vladimir Clementis, Laco Novomesky, Daniel Okali, and Jozef Soltesz. Siroky appreciated the advantages to be gained from the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs; these included frequent direct contact with Moscow, not only through the Soviet Ambassador in Prague, but also through personal contact with the Kremlin as a member of Government delegations to the USSR. Consequently, when Clementis was in New York in 1949 as head of the Czech United Nations delegation, took charge of the Foreign Ministry despite Clementis' opposition. Later, with Slansky's aid, Siroky removed Clementis and succeeded him as Foreign Minister. Slansky and Siroky had obtained the approval of Moscow for this move without the knowledge of Gottwald. Gottwald was opposed to the removal of Clementis and delayed it until compelled by Moscow to give his consent. Gottwald realized that Siroky would exploit his new position to further his own career, whereas he had already decided to dominate the Foreign Ministry himself. Siroky was primarily concerned with gaining control of the direct channel to the Kremlin. Secretary-General of the Party Slansky and Prime Minister Antonin Zapotocky, in addition to President Gottwald, had direct access to Moscow. Gottwald's first aim when he began to centralize power in his hands in 1950 was to bring under his control all contacts with the Kremlin. The elimination of Slansky was a major step forward in this plan.
7. The recent reorganization of the Government was merely a continuation of Gottwald's effort to centralize power. Thus the appointment of David was designed to eliminate Siroky's contact with the Kremlin. This became even more imperative when, after Slansky's removal, Siroky became the number two Communist as head of the Slovak Communist Party. Gottwald planned to make Siroky responsible for the accelerated economic development of Slovakia. It was a foregone conclusion that Siroky would fail and thus the way would be paved for his liquidation. Despite the cool relationship between Gottwald and Zapotocky, the latter did not interfere in Gottwald's actions against Siroky because he, too, was afraid of an increase of Siroky's power at the expense of his own.
8. With Slansky out of the way, Gottwald turned to the problem of eliminating Zapotocky. His reorganization of the Government early in 1953 cut into Zapotocky's power sphere. He planned next to replace Zapotocky as Prime Minister by Jaromir Dolensky. An indication of Gottwald's increased strength was shown in the composition of the Czech delegation to Stalin's funeral: the Slovak Communist Party was represented by Minister of National Security, Karol Bacilek, a Gottwald man, rather than by the head of the Party, Siroky; the Government was represented by Minister of National Defense Alexej Cepicka, Gottwald's son-in-law, and not by Prime Minister Zapotocky.

9. With Gottwald's death, the center of power shifted. Zapotocky, as head of the Government and the most powerful Communist, became number one man in the Party. Zapotocky has no competitors of any importance, although Siroky is a potentially dangerous rival. Zapotocky is compelled to continue the tactics started against Siroky by Gottwald. Zapotocky can count on the loyalty of the Gottwald faction headed by Dolansky, Antonin Novotny, and Vachlav Kopecky, not from devotion but from the exigencies of the situation. Siroky's only hope lies in Moscow's support. Zapotocky is already compromised in the eyes of Moscow for his responsibility for the under-fulfillment of deliveries from Czechoslovakia to the USSR. Siroky does not share this blame because he did not deal with economic matters except for the industrialization of Slovakia. Another factor against Zapotocky is his membership in that group of old-guard revolutionaries which is being liquidated throughout the Peoples' Democracies. Furthermore, he was originally a Social Democrat. If the Kremlin should decide in favor of Siroky, a new radicalism in domestic policy and new Party purges could be expected.